

CALVERT MANOR
1925-27 N. Calvert Street
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1424
VA-1424

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

CALVERT MANOR

HABS No. VA-1424

Location: 1925-27 North Calvert Street, Arlington County, Virginia.
38° 53'42" N, 77° 5'32" W; UTM coordinates: 18 318540/4307000.

Description: Calvert Manor is a three-story, walk-up garden apartment building constructed of concrete block load-bearing walls faced with red brick. The exterior is augmented by cast stone and cement brick detailing and by bands of glass block. The west (front) façade is asymmetrical, with the north end dominated by a bay front and the south by a peaked roof over the stair hall. The bay windows are separated by panels of light-colored stone; elsewhere on the front façade original metal casement windows abound in all shapes and sizes, including small rectangular windows, bull's eye windows, picture windows, and corner windows. The two primary entrances into the building are also on the west façade; both sport aluminum marquees and retain the original wood doors and sidelights. The building is capped by a parapet with a cast-stone coping. The parapet also contains several ornamental grilles, again made of cast stone, and a cast-stone lion on the south elevation looks toward Lee Highway from the parapet line.

The initial building permit (#22337) was issued in October 1948 to F&W Construction; the permit specified twenty-two apartment units.¹ Today there are twenty-three, with the last occupying the space of a basement playroom. The apartments are a mix of efficiencies, and one-, two-, and three-bedroom units.

Subsequent permits reference the installation of a fuel-oil tank in 1949 and fencing in 1956. The (original) parking lot is located at the north end of the lot, but the clothes drying yard to the rear (east) of the building was removed in 1997.

History: The *moderne*-styled apartment building was erected in 1948 and stands as an example of the later work of the architect, Mihran Mesrobian (1889-1975). In the 1940s, Mesrobian designed a dozen or so apartment buildings and shopping centers in Arlington County, including Calvert Manor, although few of these buildings survive. Calvert Manor represents the blending of high-style *moderne* architectural elements with low-cost materials (concrete block, cement brick, glass block); as such, the visually-interesting building offered affordable housing with comfortable

¹ Records of the Arlington County Building Department, Building Permits, Virginia Room, Arlington County Public Library (microfilm)/ "House Numbers and Street Names" Cards, on file, Arlington County Historic Preservation Division.

amenities, like the off-street parking, laundry, drying yard, live-in janitor, and communal playroom, to the less affluent. Mesrobian's designs were a response to the population boom that occurred in Arlington as war-time government, industry, and military personnel moved into the county. The population doubled during this decade and as a result Arlington experienced a housing shortage. Mesrobian's Calvert Manor was one of many financed by a FHA loan and erected in response to Arlington's new residents need for places to live.

Sources: "Calvert Manor," Nomination, 1997, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service.

ADDENDUM TO:
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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